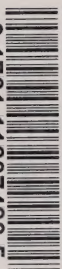


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FleetSmart PROFILES

BELL CANADA – ONTARIO AND QUEBEC REGIONS

*Driver Training
and Controlled
Maintenance Reduce
Fleet Operating Costs*

A focus on safe driving practices and proactive maintenance has enabled Bell Canada's Ontario and Quebec regional operations to reduce their fleet fuel consumption, save on repair and capital costs, and minimize service interruptions.



The Ontario and Quebec fleet operations

Bell Canada's fleets in Ontario and Quebec are managed from offices in Toronto and Montréal, respectively. Using common fleet management practices, the two regional operations have eliminated virtually all duplication of support staff. However, both regions continue to have their own fleet managers. In Ontario, Ray Bretzloff, Fleet Account Manager, works closely with Bryan Munslow, Fleet Manager, Marketing and Sales. In Quebec, Pierre Bujold, Fleet Services Engineer, provides technical and engineering support to the operational fleet managers.

In total, the Bell Canada fleets in Ontario and Quebec comprise more than 8 000 vehicles, 75 per cent of which are cars, vans and light trucks. The rest of the vehicles are medium- and heavy-duty trucks, trailers, forklifts, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles. Many of the vehicles are equipped with racks and ladders and carry heavy loads. Most are fuelled by gasoline or

service

diesel fuel, although 120 of the vehicles are powered by propane. A typical fleet vehicle travels about 20 000 kilometres per year.

Driver training focuses on fuel efficiency and safety

At Bell, driver training plays a fundamental role in maintaining fuel efficiency and driver safety. It is an ongoing process that ensures that drivers continue to meet the company's high standards of performance.

The training process begins when an individual is hired by Bell to perform a job that involves driving a company vehicle. Each new driver receives a four-hour road test that focuses on travelling at the proper speed, acceleration procedures, braking techniques and vehicle use, among other topics. Drivers of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles receive additional training on progressive shifting techniques and the use of high torque rise engines, and are taught how to drive properly in all road and weather conditions. Instruction is also provided on positioning loads to control weight distribution on the truck.

In addition to this initial training, all drivers are required to take two company-administered road tests each year. Monthly input is also sought from Bell Canada's regional maintenance departments to pinpoint any mechanical problems that may have been caused by poor driving habits.

"The driver training program focuses on accident prevention, defensive driving and proper fuel consumption," says Mr. Munslow. And it has paid off, both financially and in terms of Bell's public image. Since the program began, the company has experienced

Longer vehicle life

The impact of controlled maintenance goes far beyond fuel savings. For example, it has extended vehicle life and reduced the capital costs of ownership (including maintenance, overhead and depreciation). This has enabled the company to revise its former policy of replacing vehicles every four to five years or 80 000 kilometres. Now, vehicles are replaced after approximately seven years or 150 000 kilometres.

"We have been able to save two to three years on the vehicle life, which has resulted in substantial savings," notes Ray Bretzloff, Bell's Fleet Account Manager for Ontario.

much lower accident rates and received fewer complaints about drivers. It has also achieved significant savings in vehicle replacement costs, as well as fuel savings through the use of progressive shifting, minimal idling and reduced speeding.

"We are very concerned with safe driving," notes Mr. Bujold, "but fuel consumption is also a big factor in driver training."

Innovative controlled maintenance program

Bell Canada's fleet management philosophy does not begin and end with driver training. A controlled maintenance program has also been implemented to ensure better vehicle reliability and safety, and to reduce maintenance and replacement costs.

Under this program, each vehicle undergoes a detailed schedule of regular maintenance, including both major and minor inspections. This approach prevents many mechanical problems from occurring and can help the company address problems that do occur before they lead to on-the-road breakdowns, which are costly and can result in service interruptions. "It is definitely a more effective way of managing the fleet," states Mr. Bujold.

The success of the controlled maintenance program has led to a number of related cost-saving measures. For example, maintenance operations are now being centralized and the company's mechanics are receiving more and better training (for the most part, Bell's vehicle maintenance is done in-house). The ordering and stocking of spare parts has also been centralized, which has improved Bell Canada's purchasing power and resulted in lower costs.

Regular monitoring of vehicle fuel consumption has underlined the benefits of the controlled maintenance program. According to Mr. Bujold, older vehicles continue to perform very efficiently compared with new vehicles that are regularly added to the fleet. The average fuel consumption for vehicles involved in telephone service installation, for example, is 22.2 litres per 100 kilometres for large vans and 18.9 litres per 100 kilometres for minivans.

"These figures show that the controlled maintenance program is working," states Mr. Bujold.

Pay now, save later

"If you invest in a controlled maintenance program, you will see a reduction of dollars spent and an increase in long-term savings, including safety," concludes Mr. Munslow. "It's a 'pay me now or pay me later' situation, where the costs are paid up front, but you get your costs back threefold. I'd rather use a pot of grease now than a pot of money later."



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